RESTOCKING HARVEST AREAS

The Gallatin National Forest's Forest Plan projected average annual outputs for reforestation and timber stand improvement. These include Forest Plan reforestation levels for the period 1996-2015 of 2200 acres, and Forest Plan timber stand improvement levels for the period 1996-2005 of 671 acres and for the period 2006-2015 of 610 acres.

Reforestation targets are stipulated only in timber-suitable management areas and vary in scale by individual management area. They are stated as an annual workload as follows:
MA7: 70 acres
MA8: 500 acres
MA9: 150 acres
MA10: 350 acres
MA11: 470 acres
MA13: 590 acres
MA24: allows timber to be salvaged where mining operations will disturb vegetation.

For the period 2004-2006, the reforestation program on the Gallatin National Forest was as follows:

Year	# of Planting Units	Total Acres	Mean Size (ac.)
2004	18	377	21
2005	15	214	14
2006	22	276	13

These levels fall way short of the Forest Plan levels. There are 2 main reasons for this shortfall. The level of timber harvest prescribed by the Forest Plan has never been realized and there have been limited funds available for reforestation in this Region.

The reforestation that has occurred in this time period was very successful. Of the 38 Reforestation Indices generated from TSMRS which illustrate the effectiveness of various aspects of the reforestation program, several indices were selected to characterize the effectiveness of the reforestation program (index numbers 1,3,16 and 37).

- Plantation Success Index #1 shows the trend in successfully implementing an artificial reforestation program measured as a percentage of the number of stands with any plant in the last 5 years that are currently progressing or certified. **The rating for the Gallatin NF is 99%.**
- Natural Regeneration Success index #3 shows the trend in successfully implementing a natural regeneration program measured as a percentage of the number of stands with an initiating activity for natural regeneration in the last 5 years that are currently progressing or certified. **The rating for the Gallatin NF is 41%.** Regeneration exams are often considered lower priority when funding is limited, which it has been over the past 3 years.
- Certification of Stocking Index #16 shows the trend of how well silvicultural prescriptions are implemented measured as a percentage of stands with a regeneration harvest since 1996 with a C (certified), P (progressing) or F (failing) for the current regeneration status. **The rating for the Gallatin NF is 90%.**
- First Year Planting Success Index #37 shows the trend in how successfully the planting program is being implemented and administered as a measure of the number of stands with an initial plant in the last year currently certified or progressing. **The rating for the Gallatin NF is 100%.**

When lynx became a listed species and the Conservation Strategy prohibited pre-commercial thinning in potential lynx habitat, there was very little opportunity for timber stand improvement work (TSI) in the period 2004-2006; funding was also limited for this resource activity.

In conclusion, reforestation efforts on the Gallatin have fallen far short of what the Forest Plan prescribed, due to the low levels of timber harvest and the lack of funding. The focus of the program is planting in fire areas where plantations burn and there is little opportunity for natural regeneration. For the 2004-2006 period, reforestation efforts were focused in the large fire areas from 2001. However, as shown by the indices listed above, the there has been excellent success in re-establishing trees on the forest.

In the future, TSI program work will be focused in the wild-land urban interface areas and municipal watersheds. A recent Forest Plan Amendment for lynx will allow some flexibility in using pre-commercial thinning especially in fuel reduction type projects. Without this tool available and funding to implement these kinds of treatments, the present trends will continue and result in increasing levels of ladder fuels which could facilitate crown-type fire events, and a continuation of dysgenic and diseased trees from overstocked conditions in previously harvested stands that are potential wood production areas for future generations.